

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1264

INFO AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, NI

SUBJECT: FMG AGAIN MOVES STRENGTHEN HOLD OVER MEDIA

REF: LAGOS 8630, LAGOS 8477, LAGOS 8249

1. SUMMARY: IN SEPTEMBER 16 ADDRESS TO NIGERIAN MEDIA EDITORS, FMG INFO COMMISSIONER OUTLINED QTE GUIDING CONSIDERATIONS UNQTE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S DECISIONS AND FUTURE ACTION AND CALLED UPON PRESS ASSIST GOVERNMENT REALIZATION ITS OBJECTIVES FOR NATION. REITERATING FMG'S BELIEF PRESS FREEDOM, COMMISSIONER STATED GOVERNMENT ACTIVELY CONSIDERING ESTABLISHMENT QTE PRESS COUNCIL UNQTE AND QTE NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY UNQTE. END SUMMARY.

2. FMG INFO COMMISSIONER, BRIG. IBRAHIM B. M. HARUNA ADDRESSED MEDIA EDITORS LAGOS SEPT. 16 URGING THEM COOPERATE WITH GOVERNMENT TO QTE FORGE CLOSER AND BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND REPORTING OF GOVERNMENT DECISIONS AND ACTIVITIES UNQTE. HARUNA EXPRESSED HOPE GOVERNMENT AND MEDIA WILL QTE JOINTLY PARTICIPATE IN MOBILISING OUR PEOPLE FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE POSITIVE, DYNAMIC AND PROGRESSIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CHANGE WHICH THIS ADMINISTRATION WILL BRING ABOUT UNQTE.

3. COMMISSIONER THEN OUTLINED SEVEN QTE GUIDING CONSIDERATIONS UNQTE WHICH FMG INTENDS FOLLOW IN ITS DECISIONS AND FUTURE ACTIONS AND WHICH MEDIA SHOULD RECOGNIZE AND PROMOTE IN ENDEAVOR FOR QTE MORE CREDITABLE AND OBJECTIVE REPORTAGE UNQTE. GUIDING CONSIDERATIONS ARE:

- I. QTE NATIONAL UNITY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY WILL NOT BE COMPROMISED UNQTE HENCE FMG QTE WILL MAINTAIN CREDITABLE ARMED FORCES; UNQTE
- II. QTE TO FACE UP TO NIGERIAN REALITIES SUCH AS CORRUPTION AND NATION BUILDING, UNQTE GOVERNMENT QTE WILL ACT WITH EFFICIENCY, MODERNITY AND IMPARTIALITY TOWARDS ALL BY UPHOLDING RULE OF LAW; UNQTE
- III. GOVERNMENT WILL QTE FURTHER THE PRACTICE OF A CONSTITUTION WITHIN A VIABLE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK WHICH ALLOWS CONSIDERABLE AUTONOMY TO THE STATES; UNQTE
- IV. FMG WILL QTE PROTECT AND QUARANTEE SECURITY AND FREEDOM ALL CITIZENS AS REGULATED BY LAW BY MAINTAINING CREDITABLE POLICE SERVICES, PRISON SERVICES UNQTE AND INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY;
- V. GOVERNMENT INTENDS QTE TRANSFORM NIGERIA INTO VIRILE NATION FOUNDED ON EQUALITY, JUSTICE AND CONCERN FOR HAPPINESS ALL ITS PEOPLE UNQTE THROUGH QTE EVEN DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTENANCE HIGH ECONOMIC GROWTH RATE; UNQTE
- VI. FMG DESIRES QTE ENHANCE PARTICIPATION BY ALL SECTIONS NIGERIAN COMMUNITY BY DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES; UNQTE
- VII. NEW ADMINISTRATION WILL QTE EVOLVE EVENTUALLY CONSULTATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY GOVERNMENT, WHICH WILL ALLOW PEACEFUL CHANGE LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION UNQTE.

4. COMMISSIONER FURTHER CHARGED EDITORS ASSIST GOVERNMENT REALIZATION OBJECTIVES THIRD NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND FMG'S POLITICAL PROGRAM, WHICH QTE WILL SOON BE ANNOUNCED BY HEAD OF STATE UNQTE. AIM IS TO QTE MAKE ALL NIGERIANS LIVE A MORE REALISTIC AND MEANINGFUL LIFE UNDER A FREE AND OPEN SOCIETY, UNQTE WITH ALL EQUAL UNDER LAWS OF LAND. PRESS ALSO ENJOINED FOCUS PUBLIC ATTENTION ON QTE DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCE UNQTE SUCH AS QTE CORRUPTION IN HIGH AND LOW PLACES, INFLATION, INEFFICIENCY, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNQTE... AND QTE INHUMAN TREATMENT METED OUT TO PEOPLE SEEKING SERVICE IN HOSPITALS, HOTELS, BANKS, ETC. UNQTE.

5. IN OBVIOUS FOLLOW-UP TO CHIEF OF STAFF BRIG. OBASNAJO'S AUGUST 22 PRESS CONFERENCE AND AUG. 29 STATEMENT WARNINGS TO PRESS (REPORTED REFTELS), HARUNA DIRECTED MEDIA TO QTE REPORT AND COMMENT OBJECTIVELY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY WITHOUT RANCOUR, BITTERNESS AND VINDICTIVENESS UNQTE. COMMISSIONER REITERATED

FMG'S BELIEF FREEDOM OF PRESS THEN WENT ON SAY GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS SHOULD ONLY BE SEEN TO BE IN INTEREST GENERAL PUBLIC OR NATIONAL SECURITY AND (IN THAT CONTEXT, PRESUMABLY) WOULD NOT DETRACT FROM FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. HARUNA CONTINUED GOVERNMENT QTE ACTIVELY CONSIDERING UNQTE SETTING UP QTE PRESS COUNCIL UNQTE TO ACT AS QTE CLEARING CENTRE FOR MEDIA PRACTICES UNQTE IN ORDER TO QTE HELP REGULATE AND ENSURE ADHERENCE TO PRESS CODE. UNQTE. PRESS COUNCIL WOULD ACT IN COOPERATION MEDIA ASSOCIATION. HARUNA DECLARDD FMG ALSO GIVING QTE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION UNQTE ESTABLISHMENT NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY. (SEE LAGOS 8477 FOR EARLIER REPORT WE RECEIVED ON THIS SUBJECT.) HE ENDED WITH INVITATION FOR SUGGESTIONS RE IMPROVEMENT COMMUNICATION HIS MINISTRY AND MEDIA.

6. COMMENT: HEAVY-HANDED LANGUAGE OF HARUNA'S ADDRESS APPARENTLY PART OF FMG'S DRIVE MANIPULATE THE MEDIA, BOTH IN TERMS RESTRAINING AND PREPARING IT FOR USE. WOULD SEEM CASE OF OVERKILL AS MEDIA MOSTLY GOVERNMENT OWNED AND HAS BEEN ENTHUSIASTICALLY SUPPORTIVE OF NEW GOVERNMENT, EVEN SYCOPHANTIVTLLY SO. HOWEVER, PRESENT ADMINISTRATION IS ACTIVE MILITARY ONE, INCLINED METICULOUSLY TO ARRANGE ITS ENVIRONMENT, MAKING SURE ITS ORDERS ARE UNDERSTOOD AND OBEYED. HARSHNESS SOMEWHAT OFFSET BY BENEFICENCE OF ITS STATED SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC GOALS.

7. FURTHER, FMG SEEMS BE USING THE VEHICLE OF PRESS BRIEFINGS TO INFORM PUBLIC OF ITS THINKING. IN ABSENCE ANNOUNCED POLICIES WITH REGARD MANY BURNING ISSUES (E.G. RETURN CIVILIAN RULE), THESE MEETINGS WITH PRESS OFFER REGIME WAY TALKING WITH PUBLIC. FOR EXAMPLE, SEVEN "GUIDING CONSIDERATIONS" IS COMPILATION PREVIOUSLY STATED GENERAL GOALS PRESENT ADMINISTRATION AND MAY REPRESENT A GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE REGIME'S "SOON TO BE ANNOUNCED" POLITICAL PROGRAM. IF SO, ADVOCATES OF IMMEDIATE RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE MAY HAVE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAIT WHILE MUHAMMED ADMINISTRATION STRAIGHTENS OUT THE INHERITED MESS AND PREPARES NIGERIAN SOCIETY AND INSTITUTIONS FOR AN EVENTUAL HANDOVER TO CIVILIAN RULE. WE, AND MANY NIGERIAN OBSERVERS, AWAIT HEAD OF STATE MUHAMMED'S OCTOBER 1 INDEPMEDENCE DAY ADDRESS TO SEE IF THERE MAY BE FURTHER, MORE DETAILED ELUCIDIATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES.  
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